

A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine



Walter H. Kilham



James C. Hopkins



William R. Greeley

Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley

The discovery of the office job file maintained by Kilham and Hopkins and their successor firms provides a complete list of the Maine work by this Boston architectural firm. Best known in the early twentieth century as designers of suburban houses and country estates, urban apartment houses, and public schools, they are remembered today for their contribution to worker housing and the introduction of garden city planning ideas.¹ Their buildings in Maine were a microcosm of their careers, well-documented by both Kilham and Greeley's penchant for self-promotion through the popular and professional press.

Walter H. Kilham (1868-1948), the son of a Beverly, Massachusetts banker, graduated in 1889 from the pioneer four-year architectural course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After working briefly for several prominent firms in Boston, he won the Rotch traveling scholarship which allowed him to study independently throughout Europe from 1893 to 1895. Basing himself in Paris, he did not attend the Ecole, but studied ancient and modern

buildings throughout Europe and met the artist Jane Houston of San Francisco, whom he married in 1896.

Returning to Boston in 1895, Kilham went to work for Winslow and Wetherell as a draftsman and designer and in 1898 established an independent architectural practice. In 1901, when he was faced with his first large Boston apartment house project, he invited James Hopkins, a recent "Tech" graduate working in Winslow and Wetherell's office, to form a partnership.² An advocate of the Colonial Revival, with a strong sense of the past, Kilham was for many years the historian of the Boston Society of Architects and author of *Boston After Bulfinch*, the first monograph of Boston's nineteenth century architects and their buildings.

James Cleveland Hopkins (1873-1938) was the son of a Boston leather merchant who grew up in suburban Jamaica Plain. After graduating from the MIT architectural program in 1896, Hopkins went to work as a draftsman for Winslow and Wetherell, where he rose to office supervisor. In 1908 he married well and focused his life around his summer estate in Dover, Massachusetts, and his social club, the Pokanocket, attracting many wealthy clients.

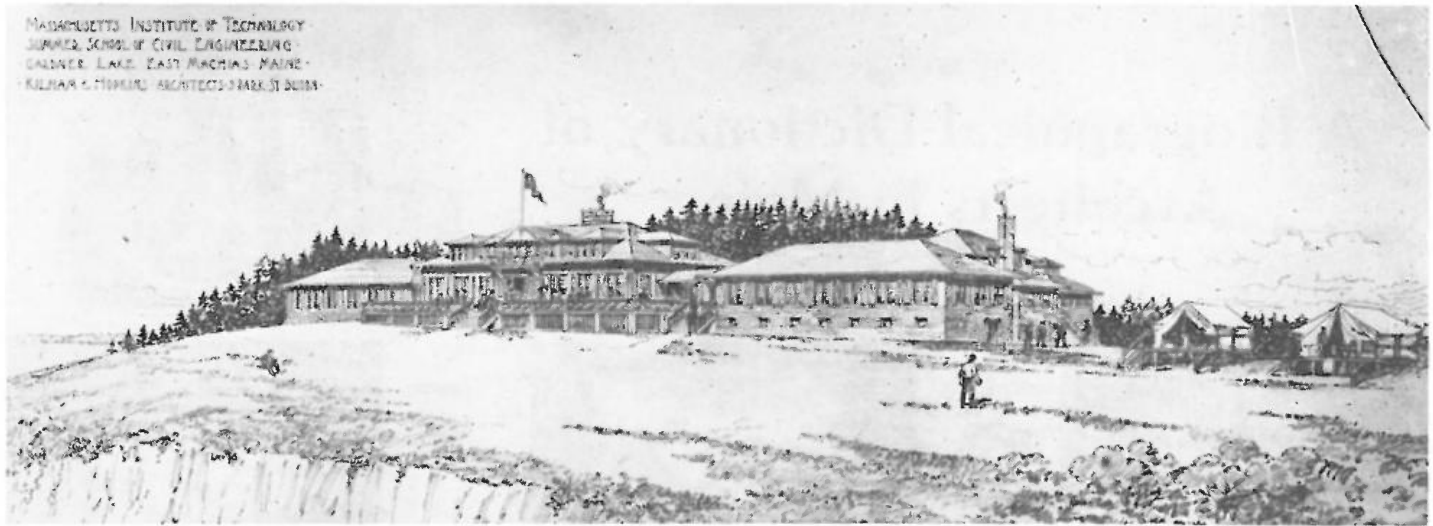


Figure 1. M.I.T. Summer School of Civil Engineering, Gardner Lake, 1911 perspective view (Courtesy of M.I.T. Museum).

Although both partners were members of the American Institute of Architects, the Boston Society of Architects, and the Boston Architectural Club, Hopkins did not publish as often as Kilham and younger architects in the office like William Roger Greeley. Hopkins spent part of each year in England, which reinforced his taste for the half-timbered estates and Arts and Crafts homes which seem to have been his contribution to the firm's work.³

William Roger Greeley (1881-1966), an idealistic young architect and planner, joined Kilham and Hopkins in 1916. As a draftsman in R. Clipston Sturgis' office from 1903 to 1915, Greeley supervised the construction of the white marble wings to the Massachusetts State House. A member of the Massachusetts Civic League's state housing committee which helped write the 1912 Town and City Tenement Laws, an idealistic Unitarian, and a progressive reformer, Greeley was an important addition to the Kilham and Hopkins firm and published several articles on architectural practice and housing reform before becoming a partner in 1925.⁴

The earliest Kilham and Hopkins design project in Maine was a memorial entrance to Bowdoin College. This gateway was presented by the Class of 1878. The project was begun in 1903 and completed the next year by Charles Hacker using a decorative wrought iron arch joining the two center posts of four brick pillars "of colonial design." Brass plaques from the Chelmsford Foundry are located on either side of the arch. In June, 1904 the memorial gateway was dedicated with an address by Professor Alfred E. Burton, a member of the 1878 and dean of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.⁵ This small design commission was undoubtedly obtained through Professor Burton, who would have known Kilham as the new secretary for the MIT Class of 1889. Kilham and Hopkins' clients were often

classmates or other graduates of the engineering and architecture school. The architects' close relationship to MIT also can be seen when in 1911 the institution itself became their client.

For many years civil engineering students had practiced surveying in the Boston environs, but there was an expressed need for a rural "Summer Camp and School for the study and practice of Surveying." In 1911 and 1912 Boston manufacturer Albert Farwell Bemis, a civil engineering graduate of MIT's 1893 class, anonymously presented 800 acres on Gardner Lake in Marion, four miles from the coastal village of East Machias, for a summer training camp. Here Kilham and Hopkins designed a two-story administration building with lecture rooms, guest rooms, and offices centered on a thirty foot square lounge, half open to the roof and dominated by a huge stone fireplace on the rear wall. In front was a broad deck, to the west a drafting room, and to the east a dining piazza with kitchen facilities in a rear ell (Figure 1). Both one story wings were set back and connected to the central block for covered piazzas. Students and bachelor faculty slept in two parallel rows of tents set on wooden platforms adjacent to this complex.⁶

The MIT summer school building, constructed by A.R. Gilson for just under \$17,000, was first used during the summer of 1912 and continued as a field school for engineering students for forty years (Figure 2). Alterations and minor additions to the attic over the drafting room were made by Kilham and Hopkins in 1920. By the 1930s small cottages for married instructors were built next to the main hall without the help of architects. In 1953 MIT accepted the report of a visiting committee for the Department of Civil and Sanitary Engineering that the summer surveying camp be discontinued and that field work return to the Boston area. While the building survives, it is no longer in use.⁷



Figure 2. Instructors and students in front of Administration Building, M.I.T. Summer School, 1912 view (Courtesy of M.I.T. Museum).

Walter Kilham was probably responsible for designs to convert a small sheep farmer's house along the Wiscasset shore into the headquarters of Camp Chewonki, a summer camp for boys begun in 1915. The camp's founder, Clarence E. Allen, also lived in Brookline, Massachusetts, and the architect's son Peter H. Kilham attended the camp in 1918. The Kilham and Hopkins office files show charges of \$113 for designing the alterations that year, and the camp's archives retain the bill from Edgecomb contractor S.D. Sherman for building materials and 77 days labor totalling \$691. Before and after photographs of the early nineteenth century cape show its transformation into a rustic retreat looking very much like Kilham's own camp and the architect's work on that of former president Grover Cleveland, both at Tamworth, New Hampshire. The building remains the headquarters of the Chewonki Foundation and is the object of future renovation and endowment plans.⁸

The architects' perspective drawing of the MIT summer school at Gardner Lake was published with Herbert Croly's review of "The Work of Kilham & Hopkins," in the February, 1912 *Architectural Record*. Focusing primarily on their schools and domestic buildings, Croly described the firm as "fairly typical of the better contemporary architectural practice," with a region-wide reputation for maintaining a high standard of excellence. While not a firm that had made "any particularly individual contribution to American architecture," the architects had already added to the New England building stock a large number of buildings "which have given prolonged and renewed life to sound local tradition."⁹

More typical of schools by Kilham and Hopkins is the 1922-24 example in Belfast, published in *The American Architect* in 1925. A memorial to former Governor William G. Crosby, the high school was touted in a promotional booklet as "the last word

in modern school-building construction and appointment" and as a center of education in Waldo County.¹⁰ Its form was derived from a series of red brick schools in Boston and surrounding Massachusetts communities for which the architects were already well known. The square exterior massing was broken by a beltcourse separating the ground story from the two upper floors, symmetrical extension of the side wings beyond the plane of the facade, and a slight projection of the pedimented entrance bay with a rusticated base upon which two-story pilasters rest. Each side wall has a central bay projecting to form a secondary entrance and interior stairway.

A similar industrial design, stripped of the classical vocabulary used on schools, can be seen in the brick office building designed for the Eastern Manufacturing Company, a pulp paper company headquartered in South Brewer. A rendering was published in *The Industrial Journal* for December, 1916 with a description of some of the technological advances hidden within the brick walls erected since September by the Foundation Company of New York. A basement of reinforced concrete, partially exposed on one end, contained a garage for twenty automobiles complete with an automatic overhead car wash and washing floor. Above, the company's twenty-two offices were fireproof, sprinkled, and finished with oak dados, plaster walls, and "linotile" floors laid in six inch squares of light and dark brown separated by white strips. Each office had telephone service. The front and rear vestibules were designed with terrazzo floors.¹¹ The building survives as the offices of Eastern Fine Papers, a division of the Eddy Paper Company.

Like most architectural practices at the turn of the century, Kilham and Hopkins' domestic work was split between new design and the alteration of older buildings, especially for summer homes or rural estates. On Westport Island just off the Sheepscot River from Wiscasset, the firm redesigned an old two-story farmhouse into a summer home for Mr. and Mrs. Frank Eaton, who are remembered for their large steam yacht called *Helena*. Among the 1913 alterations by a local carpenter named Gove was a huge front porch that has since been removed by the present owners.

Kilham's personal reminiscences provide the best documentation for the firm's largest commission in Maine. As the partner most directly connected to wealthy clients, James Hopkins "had the rather unusual ability to charge enough for his services and making the clients like it." Hopkins was the designer of the Alexander S. Porter, Jr. estate in Brooklin, the largest house done by the firm during the original partnership (Figure 3). The house was published in the *Boston Architectural Club Yearbook for 1920* as "A Country House [on the] Northern Coast of Maine" (Figure 4). It is an asymmetrical composition of vernacular New England house forms, a central two-story block containing a central hall and dining room



Figure 3. Great Cove Farm, Porter Estate, Brooklin, *Boston Architectural Club Yearbook for 1920* (Courtesy of Richard W. Cheek).

with principal chambers above, connecting through an office extension to the canted living room on one end, with a projecting bungalow for the children on the opposite end and joining with the service wing angled along one edge of the rear drive. Kilham remembered it as "fireproof and costing \$200,000 and incidentally built under a heated shed in the dead of winter" in 1916 by Porter's contractor, the Whidden Beekman Company.¹²

Porter's summer estate, Great Cove Farm, contained in addition to the house, a combined boathouse and playhouse along the shore by the dock, a farmhouse, an office, a stable, and a garden all designed by Kilham and Hopkins. According to *The Industrial Journal*, the stable was a "model barn" with such fireproof features as:

brick walls, steel beams, and concrete floor. Everything is under one roof, making it especial-

ly accessible in the winter. The barn will be lighted by electricity, while artesian well water will be pumped by electricity into three storage tanks fitted with air compressors and having a capacity of five thousand pounds.¹³

The stable is used today as a wooden boat building school run in conjunction with *Woodenboat Magazine*, whose editorial offices occupy the main house and grounds.

Kilham's contribution to Maine summer homes were two designs for William H. Marland and his wife, Marion Goodall Marland, on Bickford Island at Cape Porpoise, along the coast in Kennebunkport. That Kilham was the architect may be inferred from the fact that the firm also designed the 1914 Massachusetts home for his Brookline neighbor William Marland. The files list one Cape Porpoise design in 1917, the year after Mrs. Marland bought

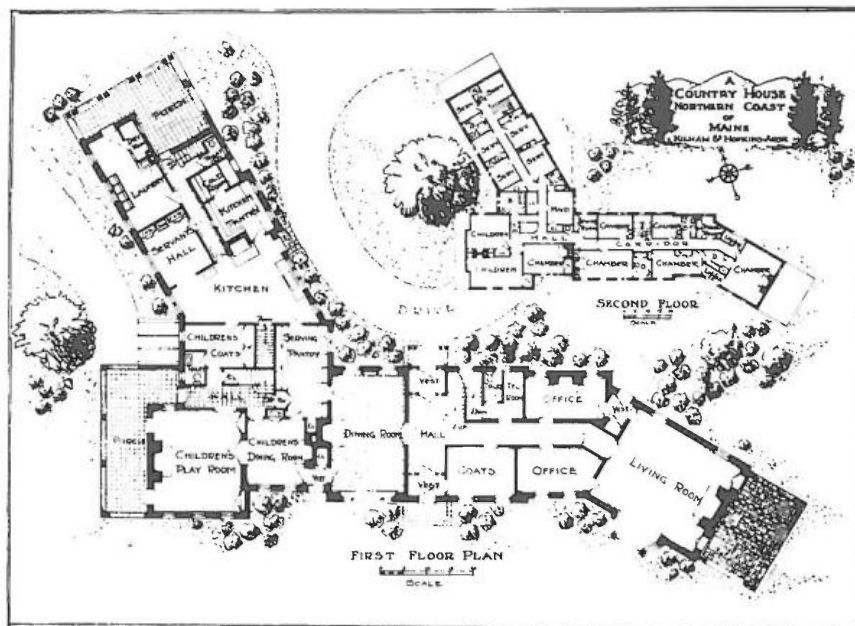


Figure 4. First and Second Floor Plans, Great Cove Farm, Porter Estate, Brooklin, *Boston Architectural Club Yearbook for 1920* (Courtesy of Richard W. Cheek).

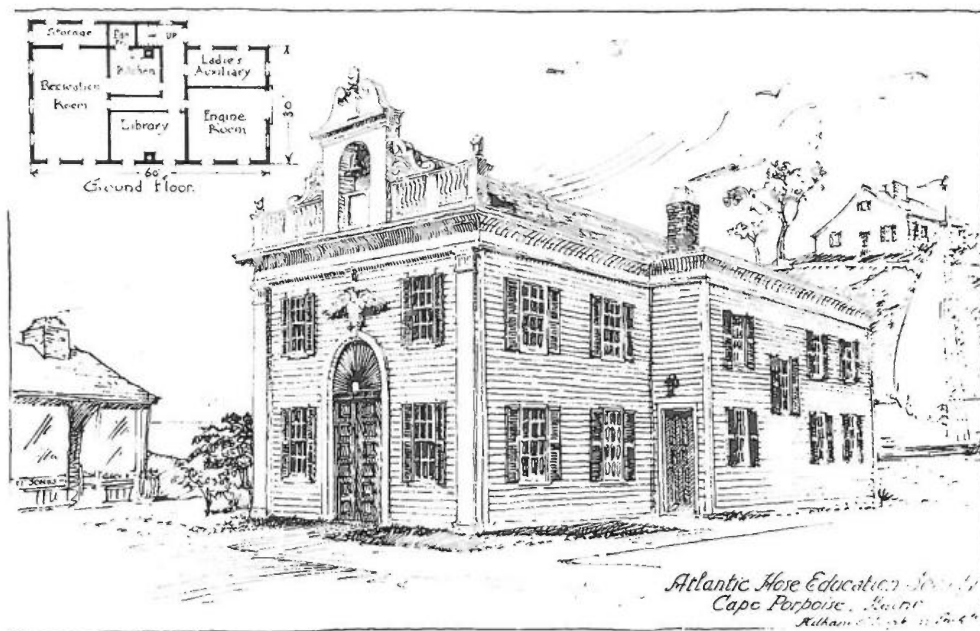


Figure 5. Recreation Building for Atlantic Hose Education Society, Cape Porpoise, *American Architect*, July, 1925 (Courtesy of Richard W. Cheek).

a cottage from a Miss Richardson and joined her relatives on Bickford Island. It is unclear if this design was actually built. Between 1919 and 1921, however, she acquired the Goodall cottage (where the family summered in 1920) and other adjoining lots. The new summer house was erected here in 1923, for which the office received a commission of \$2,000 plus \$841 for office expenses or drawings. It is a large vernacular two-story wooden box of vaguely Colonial Revival feeling.

W.H. Marland was also the patron of the other Cape Porpoise building designed by Kilham and Hopkins, the "Recreation Building for the Atlantic Hose Education Society" (Figure 5). A new engine house was actually begun before World War I, with foundations built and the first floor laid, before construction was halted "on account of the scarcity of carpenters and materials." A new building committee was formed in October, 1919, which included a W.H. "Maling."¹⁴ Marland's architects then provided a drawing, eventually published six years later in *The American Architect*, which documents their original intent. As built, this plan was reversed with the offset side entrance being switched to the north wall of the building. The single engine house and community hall was constructed between January and May of 1920 by Frank R. Hutchins, a highly esteemed local builder who also served on the building committee.¹⁵

Dominated by a Baroque false front, with a niche surmounted by a broken scrolled pediment, the building remains the focal point of Cape Porpoise. Known today as Atlantic Hall, the structure was first remodeled to hold two fire engines of the Atlantic Volunteer Engine Company. It was altered again in 1982 for fully recreational use by the Atlantic

Firemen's Educational Association when the fire company moved to a new engine house.

Perhaps the most unexpected product of the firm's work in Maine is the memorial in Portland's Evergreen Cemetery designed in 1923 for Elmer L. Wengren. Wengren, who became a Portland banker like his father, graduated from Harvard in 1889 and apparently continued his education by taking some architectural courses at MIT in the early 1890s. Perhaps it was there that he may have met either Kilham or Hopkins, culminating in this design thirty years later. According to his heirs, the oak leaf border was cut by a stone mason in Freeport.

While the firm continued to provide plans for alterations and additions to several homes and churches in Maine through the 1960s, they contributed few freestanding designs. For E.H. Sargent of Kennebunk, William Roger Greeley designed a small "Dutch Colonial" cottage in 1922; for Mrs. Y.E. Winslow of Georgetown, Kilham and Hopkins designed a 1936 bungalow; and in Madawaska they provided designs for two movie houses, the Capitol Theatre of 1943 and the State Theatre of 1946. The diverse character of the firm's work in Maine drew much from their close association with MIT and its graduates. But the retirement and death of the founding partners and the changing role of the architectural profession during and after the Depression and the Second World War all contributed to the later decline in the work of their successor firms in the state.

Richard M. Candee
Boston University
July, 1987

NOTES

- ¹ The careers of these architects are detailed in Richard M. Candee, *Atlantic Heights. A World War I Shipbuilders' Community*, Portsmouth, N.H., 1985; Richard Candee & Greer Hardwicke, "Early Twentieth Century Reform Housing by Kilham and Hopkins, Architects of Boston," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Spring, 1987. Their office job files are on cards recording each project, including built and unbuilt designs, with notations of contractors, costs, and architectural fees. The files are now in the possession of Mr. James Hopkins, Jr. of South Dartmouth, Mass.
- ² Albert N. Marquis, *Who's Who in New England*, Chicago, 1938, p. 735; Walter H. Kilham, *Personal Reminiscences*, 2 typescript volumes, Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. 1, pp. 1-52.
- ³ Henry F. Whitney and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*, Los Angeles, 1970, p. 300.
- ⁴ Greer Hardwick, "Town Houses and the Culture of Recall: Public Buildings and Civic Values and the Architectural Firm of Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley, 1900-1930," PhD. Dissertation, Boston College, 1986, Chapter 3.
- ⁵ Office file, job # 84 (1903); I thank Patricia Anderson for sharing her research on the arch, including two unidentified newspaper clippings of the June 11, 1904 dedication from a Bowdoin scrapbook.
- ⁶ MIT President's Report, Boston, 1911, pp. 70-71 and MIT President's Report, 1912, p. 61. My thanks to Lyman Holmes for checking the deeds to identify A.F. Bemis as the anonymous donor: for Bemis see *Who's Who in America 1897-1947*.
- ⁷ Office file, job # 294; C.M. Spofford, "Our New Summer Camp," *The MIT Technology Review*, November, 1912, pp. 530-37; "A Transit View," *The MIT Technology Review*, November, 1953, pp. 31-32.
- ⁸ Records and photographs of the Allen House provided by Tim Ellis, Executive Director of the Chewonki Foundation. See *Chewonki Chronicle — Special Issue*, April, 1987, for history and current plans. For New Hampshire camps, see *New Hampshire Farms for Summer Homes*, Concord, 1906, 4th ed., pp. 10-13.
- ⁹ Herbert Croly, "The Work of Kilham & Hopkins, Architects of Boston," *Architectural Record*, February, 1912, pp. 97-112.
- ¹⁰ "Belfast, Maine, William G. Crosby High School," *The American Architect*, July 15, 1925, plate 190; *William G. Crosby Junior and Senior High School, A Gift from Generous Citizens and Friends in Belfast*, Belfast, c. 1925.
- ¹¹ *Industrial Journal*, Bangor, December, 1916, p. 9.
- ¹² *Boston Architectural Club Yearbook*, 1920; Kilham, *Personal Reminiscences*, Vol. 1, p. 99; Office file, job # 497.
- ¹³ Office file, job # 605 (1917) and 991 (1923); "Cape Porpoise," *Kennebunk Enterprise*, October 16, 1919. The office files also record the 1914 design and construction of the William H. Marland Residence and Garage, Brookline, Mass., see *American Architect*, April 25, 1917.
- ¹⁴ "Recreation Building for Atlantic Hose Educational Society, Cape Porpoise, Maine," *American Architect*, July, 1925, p. 418; *Kennebunk Enterprise*, January 29, April 8, May 6, 1920.

Photographs of Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley
Courtesy of the Author

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LIST OF KNOWN COMMISSIONS IN MAINE BY KILHAM, HOPKINS & GREELEY

Class of 1878 Gateway, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, 1903-04, Extant
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology Summer School, Gardner Lake, Marion, 1911, Additions in 1920, Extant
 Frank Eaton House, Westport, 1913, Remodeling, Altered
 Sewerage Building, Lake Pocasset, Wayne, 1913, Unlocated
 Eastern Manufacturing Company Building, South Brewer, 1916, Extant
 Great Cove Farm, Alexander S. Porter, Jr., Estate, Brooklin, 1916, Extant
 William H. Marland House, Bickford Island, Cape Porpoise, 1917, Not Executed?
 Clarence E. Allen House, Alterations for Camp Chewonki, Wiscasset, 1918, Extant
 Atlantic Hose Educational Society Hall, Cape Porpoise, 1919-20, Altered
 Construction and Technology Service Corporation Housing, Auburn, 1920, Unlocated
 Clayton W. Pike House, Fryeburg, 1921, Alterations, Unlocated
 William G. Crosby High School, Belfast, 1922-24, Extant
 E. H. Sargent House, Kennebunk, 1922, Extant
 Marion Goodall Marland Cottage, Bickford Island, Cape Porpoise, 1923, Extant
 E. L. Wengren Tombstone, Evergreen Cemetery, Portland, 1923, Extant
 Unidentified Church Renovations, Calais, 1924, Unlocated
 R. W. Silloway Housing Project, Franklin, 1935, Unlocated
 Mrs. Y. E. Winslow Bungalow, Georgetown, 1936, Unlocated
 Capitol Theatre, Madawaska, 1943, Destroyed
 State Theatre, Madawaska, 1946, Altered
 Unitarian Church, Alterations, Ellsworth, 1949, Destroyed
 First Parish Church, Portland, 1957, Addition, Extant